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New York

President:	Mr. Zhang Yishan	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

Briefings by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence of Uganda

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefings by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence of Uganda

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Uganda, in which he requests that his delegation be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that delegation to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sam Kutesa (Uganda) and Mr. Amama Mbabazi (Uganda) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, and to the Minister of Defence of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Amama Mbabazi.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Mr. Sam Kutesa.

Mr. Kutesa (Uganda): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2006.

Members will recall that, during the Security Council debate in January 2006 on the situation in the Great Lakes region, I had an opportunity to discuss the question of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) terrorist organization as a threat to regional peace and security in northern Uganda, the southern Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also informed the Council of my Government's decision to establish a high-level joint country coordination and monitoring mechanism between the Government of Uganda, the United Nations, core partner countries and representatives of non-governmental organizations to support the Government's strategy and plan of action to address the humanitarian situation and the resettlement of internally displaced persons in northern Uganda.

My colleague, Mr. Amama Mbabazi, will address the question of the LRA terrorist organization as a regional threat to peace and security in northern Uganda, the southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My remarks will therefore focus on briefing Council members on the joint monitoring committee and the emergency plan for humanitarian intervention in LRA-affected areas of northern Uganda, which will be launched in Kampala by President Museveni on 26 April.

The Government of Uganda has adopted a high-level, Government-led joint country coordination and monitoring mechanism and an emergency action plan to deal with five thematic issues. Those issues include cessation of hostilities and regional security; the enhancement of protection of the civilian population; increased humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons; peacebuilding and reconciliation; and the return and resettlement of internally displaced persons. The Government also hopes to finalize, by August 2006, a comprehensive long-term peace, recovery and development plan for northern Uganda.

The joint country coordination and monitoring mechanism will consist of the following components.

First, a joint monitoring committee, chaired by the Prime Minister of Uganda, will meet once a month to take critical decisions and to coordinate action for the emergency humanitarian plan. That will therefore be a small and effective body of about 20 representative members from Government, the United Nations and civil society organizations.

Secondly, there will be two subcommittees on peacebuilding and reconstruction and on protection, humanitarian assistance and the return of internally displaced persons. The subcommittees, reflecting the strengthening of existing coordination structures, will be comprised of Government institutions and partners in relevant areas to undertake coordination and implementation work and to report to the joint monitoring committee.

Thirdly, there will be a strengthened secretariat in the office of the Prime Minister, with adequate staffing and resources to support the joint monitoring committee and its subcommittees.

The joint monitoring committee on the LRA-affected northern areas will be tasked with, inter alia, identifying, discussing and monitoring issues related to the emergency action plan for humanitarian intervention in LRA-affected areas; providing advice to Government, key partners and other stakeholders on action areas; establishing benchmarks and mobilizing resources needed for the implementation of the emergency humanitarian action plan; and ensuring that decisions taken by the joint monitoring committee are implemented by relevant ministries and institutions.

The joint monitoring committee will be expected to ensure the timely implementation of the emergency action plan designed to improve the humanitarian situation facing internally displaced persons (IDPs) through: peacebuilding and monitoring of reconciliation processes at individual, community and national levels; enhanced protection of the IDP population; improving conditions for IDPs through provision of basic social services and by lowering morbidity and mortality rates; and strong support for return and reintegration of IDPs.

As shown in the matrix of the emergency action plan for humanitarian interventions for LRA-affected northern Uganda, copies of which have been circulated, each priority area indicates key actions, expected results and relevant institutions and coordination mechanisms. As the Council will notice, the matrix agreed upon in Kampala between the Government, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the core group countries on 12 April 2006, reflects general benchmarks. This is because concrete actions and technical indications and benchmarks will be worked out in the appropriate sectoral Government bodies and coordination groups within 30 days. It is expected, for example, that benchmarks on the reduction of mortality rates for IDPs will be worked out by the joint health task force composed of the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the technical benchmarks on peace and reconciliation will be worked out in the amnesty working group; etcetera.

The Government of Uganda has also, in consultation with United Nations and the core group partners, established a small regional security group to deal with the issue of the LRA terrorist organization. The security group will focus on, inter alia: a joint regional military mechanism involving Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan as well as the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to disarm the LRA based in southern Sudan and in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; facilitating and cooperation with the International Criminal Court to execute the warrants of arrest against the LRA leadership; and consolidation and promotion of dialogue between the Government of Uganda and middle-level LRA commanders to ensure a peaceful resolution of the conflict in northern Uganda.

I wish to inform the Council that the Government of Uganda is currently working with development partners on a comprehensive peace, recovery and development strategy for northern Uganda. The Government plan of action on northern Uganda includes the following elements. The first is launching and operationalizing the high-level Government-led joint mechanism committee and the emergency plan for humanitarian intervention in LRA-affected areas of northern Uganda. The second is finalizing the writing and adoption of the recovery development programme as well as initiating its implementation. The Government and all agencies will use the recovery development programme as an entry point for supporting the attainment of the medium- and long-term objectives of peace, recovery, post-conflict reconstruction and development. The ongoing programmes such as the national IDP policy and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund will be integrated into the recovery development programme.

The third element involves arranging a pledging/donor conference on the recovery and development plan for northern Uganda. The fourth is a Government commitment to increasing funding for programmes and projects for northern Uganda through the national budget and other national resources. Indeed, there are arrangements to provide a specific budgetary allocation to northern Uganda within the medium-term expenditure framework for fiscal years

2006-2007 and 2008-2009. The fifth element of the plan involves increasing the presence of civilian policing and strengthening the civilian and transitional justice systems in northern Uganda, and the sixth strengthening the capacity of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Force to wipe out the remnants of the LRA and protect the IDP camps and resettlement areas in northern Uganda.

The seventh element relates to allowing the voluntary return of IDPs through accelerated IDP camp decongestion, and in other ways, so as to ensure the security of people and property, that is, to strengthen justice, law and order. The eighth element is improving service delivery, thereby reducing mortality and morbidity challenges, illiteracy, etcetera, and the final element involves strengthening Government leadership in the delivery of social services through capacity-building and through instituting mechanisms for motivation and retention of professional staff by local governments in the affected areas.

Before concluding my remarks on the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda, I wish to make a comment on the report by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in northern Uganda entitled "Counting the cost: Twenty years of war in northern Uganda", which was released to coincide with Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland's visit to my country in early April 2006. There is no question that, due to the threats from LRA activities, the humanitarian situation facing the IDPs in northern Uganda is unacceptable. However, it is equally unacceptable that certain international NGOs should seek to exploit the plight of the IDPs for self-serving advocacy and political and resource-mobilization agendas. The report talks about a litany of failures by my Government and the international community to protect civilians in IDP camps and to peacefully resolve the LRA conflict. It alleges that there are more deaths in northern Uganda today than there are in Iraq.

First, the report fails to appreciate, as Mr. Egeland noted during his recent visit to the region, that there have been improvements in some areas of northern Uganda due to the joint efforts by the Government and our development partners to implement humanitarian response measures to deliver basic social services such as health, education, water and sanitation. For example, 40 to 60 per cent of IDPs in the Teso and Lango subregions have been resettled. The number of children "night commuters" in Gulu town has dropped from 40,000 to 6,300, due to the prevailing peace in the district. As security around IDP camps has improved, more people have been decongested to parish levels, allowing for better provision of social services, more access to land for productivity and less reliance on food handouts. Indeed, immunization levels stand at over 90 per cent; bed net coverage against malaria stands at 30 per cent; malnutrition has been reduced by 50 per cent; and the rehabilitation of many health centres has been undertaken.

Secondly, the NGOs' report used figures from a flawed draft survey commissioned by the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO on mortality rates in IDP camps in 2005. The survey figures of 1.54 deaths per 10,000 persons per day in north-central Uganda fails to take into account the sub-Saharan Africa average of a normal 1.1 deaths per 10,000 persons per day. The technical team did not use scientific research methodology. A credible team of Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF officials has been established to review the report to provide more accurate baseline data on mortality rates in IDP camps.

Thirdly, the Uganda People's Defence Force has ensured not only that the 232 internally displaced persons camps have been guarded but that they have also been receiving relief supplies. This means that the Force has kept the routes open for the supply of relief in addition to hunting the terrorists in the bushes of northern Uganda or southern Sudan.

It is my sincere hope that the international community will give the necessary support to the joint monitoring committee and the emergency action plan on humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected areas of northern Uganda and that the Security Council will give strong backing to regional efforts to disarm the LRA and hand over the LRA leadership to the international community.

With your permission, Mr. President, I would now like to invite my colleague, Mr. Amama Mbabazi, Minister of Defence, to make his remarks related to regional security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda for his statement. I also thank him for the congratulations he addressed to my country on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Amama Mbabazi, Minister of Defence of Uganda.

Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda): Allow me, Sir, to join my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, in congratulating the People's Republic of China on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2006.

My colleague talked about the relationship between the establishment of the joint monitoring committee to deal with the emergency humanitarian situation and the need for a regional security mechanism on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as a threat to regional peace and security in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan.

It is a great honour for me to address the Security Council on the security situation in northern Uganda and on the role that the international community, especially the United Nations, can play to achieve the complete eradication of the activities of terrorism visited upon the population of northern Uganda by the so-called Lord's Resistance Army. The Government of Uganda appreciates the condemnation of the LRA and its terrorist activities against the people of Uganda and the region by the Council in its resolutions, especially resolutions 1653 (2006) and 1663 (2006). We hope that the Secretary-General, in his report to the Council on the LRA, will present a comprehensive action plan to totally eliminate the scourge of terrorism, of which our country and the region have been victims for some time.

I also wish to share with the Council our analysis of the LRA as a threat to regional peace and security in Uganda, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to outline our proposals on the way forward to ensure the support of the international community for the disarmament and demobilization of the LRA and for the arrest of its leadership, which has been indicted by the International Criminal Court.

Uganda's struggle against the LRA and other foreign-supported negative forces — including the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Popular Resistance Army (PRA) — operating against Uganda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan has been long and tedious. The LRA is part of the tail end of our post-colonial history covering the period of the Idi Amin and Milton Obote Governments.

Since the launch of Operation Iron Fist in 2002, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) has sustained military pressure against the LRA and has degraded its strength from the approximately 5,000 personnel — between 2,500 and 3,000 of them armed — who were in southern Sudan in March 2002 to an estimated current strength of about 500 — 120 to 150 of them armed — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the command of Kony and his deputy, Vincent Otti. There are also a few remnants in Uganda scattered in the Acholi region in the mid-north. The LRA has moved to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a fugitive force hiding from the UPDF in Uganda and from the combined efforts of the UPDF, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Eastern Equatoria, southern Sudan.

We know that the LRA is now operating mainly in the Garamba National Park of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the Faradje-Morobo-Aba area. In a speech that I presented at a meeting held in March with the core countries and other stakeholders, I outlined the details of that area and the LRA's activities from Garamba National Park. We will be distributing a copy of that speech with a map showing the area I am discussing. It is between Juba and Yei, in southern Sudan, and Faradje-Morobo-Aba, in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Uganda's key concerns are the following. While the LRA terrorist group has been severely degraded and is on the verge of defeat at the hands of the UPDF, Uganda is very concerned that the LRA is slowly rebuilding its capacity, largely in this area. As I said, when they left southern Sudan, they were really running for dear life. But in Garamba National Park they have had time to regroup, to rest and to recruit afresh. Therefore, we are very concerned that the LRA is using Garamba National Park in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo as a safe haven to achieve that. Kony has capacity; in fact he has started recruiting through abductions — as is his tradition — not in Uganda this time, but in southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kony therefore can grow, reorganize and become a stronger potential threat to regional peace and security in Uganda, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and possibly even the Central African Republic.

The LRA is likely to link up with the Allied Democratic Forces and other negative forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to attack Uganda. As we have had occasion to say before, and as all members know, Uganda would then be forced to act in self-defence. The 1996 attack carried out in Uganda by the ADF — which originated in the Sudan and was built up and its forces in fact trained by Al-Qaida — was the cause of Uganda's involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997 and 1998, as the Council is aware and as I have had occasion to say here before.

We are therefore very concerned that if Kony is allowed to rebuild his force, he will link up with all these negative forces that are the remnants of the forces that have remained in the Congo, which were the reason for our participation in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that that will not happen. We have done everything possible to engage the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the Sudan and the international community to prevent that from recurring.

The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has had contact with the LRA. Initially, when the LRA went into Garamba National Park, MONUC representatives held a meeting with them and asked them to get out of the Congo and to go back to the Sudan. Representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo attended the meeting, and they did in fact escort the LRA back to the border once it had agreed to return to the Sudan. Unfortunately, the LRA did not keep its word and went back to Garamba. MONUC made an attempt to attack them, which led to the unfortunate death of the eight Guatemalan peacekeepers in January this year. Since that time, MONUC has had two companies — two corps — in that area, only about 50 kilometres away from the location of the LRA forces, in Garamba Park. In addition, the Government forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have a battalion-sized force located about 50 kilometres from where Kony and the LRA are camped.

This is the situation as we speak. Kony, using this as his base, has attacked a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees compound and a camp in southern Sudan, and he has continued, as I said earlier, to use this as a base to recruit and build a force from that area.

MONUC and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) have therefore not taken resolute action against the LRA, based in both southern Sudan and in northern Congo.

It is important, therefore, to develop combined efforts by regional stakeholders, with the support of the international community, to disarm, capture or arrest the indicted LRA terrorist leaders and hand them over to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Uganda would therefore propose the following elements as a way forward.

First, the Governments of the Sudan and of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should do all it takes to ensure that the LRA terrorists are disarmed and the indicted leaders arrested. Pressure should also be brought to bear on all other parties and individuals assisting the LRA to stop forthwith.

Secondly, a memorandum of understanding should be concluded as soon as possible between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, similar to the one Uganda reached with the Sudan, according to which the UPDF would be allowed to enter the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and hand over LRA terrorists. Such operations should be under the close supervision of international bodies such as MONUC, which already has a presence in the Congo, as I said earlier.

Thirdly, there should be strong coordination of the operations carried out against the LRA by national and international forces. We believe that the SPLA — the forces of the Government of the Sudan — which occupies the territory where Kony is operating; UNMIS, which is in the Sudan; MONUC, which is in the Congo; and the Government forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must coordinate operations against the LRA. We must develop a joint operational plan in which we all are involved to get rid of the LRA and its presence in the Congo.

Fourthly, a regional mechanism involving the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, the Sudan, MONUC and UNMIS needs to be set up to address the LRA problem. Uganda, on its part, has already set up a team to be part of this proposed mechanism.

Fifthly, against that backdrop, MONUC and UNMIS should be mandated to use all necessary means to disarm LRA terrorists and arrest their indicted leaders.

Sixthly, the possibility should be explored of mandating a country or regional power and giving it adequate capacity to deal with the question of the LRA, as was the case with the French-led Artemis operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2003 and the Australian-led force in East Timor, also in 2003.

I wish to inform the Council that on 30 March 2006 we had a useful interaction in Kampala with the members of the security group on the LRA, including the core partners group, which includes the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway and South Africa, and representatives of United Nations Department of Political Affairs, MONUC and UNMIS on the question of the LRA. We hope to obtain the engagement of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the Sudan with respect to our proposals in the very near future.

Finally, I wish to call upon the Security Council to support strong measures, including adequate mandates for MONUC and UNMIS to forcefully disarm the LRA, and to send a clear message to LRA supporters that any such support will not be tolerated by the Council.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Minister of Defence of Uganda for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to my country concerning its assumption to the presidency of the Council for this month.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall now invite Council members to a private meeting to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.